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circumstances under which the material in this report was collected. 114

On arriving at Petats I started immediately to work on the language, and was making good headway when I decided to move to Kurtatchi. Here I had to begin afresh upon a new dialect. The vocabulary differs considerably from that of Petats, but as the syntax is similar, my previous work was not altogether wasted. Beginning by making use of pidgin-English, with which all the younger men (but not the women nor the older people of either sex) were familiar, I gradually substituted the native dialect for conversational and working purposes, and eventually was able to use it with some degree of freedom in the give and take of everyday life, and for writing down what my informants told me. For this purpose I used a simplified form of the International Phonetic System. When taking down stories, and anything else that required to be recorded verbatim, I had little difficulty in getting the narrators to speak at a pace which I was able to follow with my pen. 114 197 126 [198]

None of these people had any acquaintance with standard English, pidgin-English being the universal medium of converse between them and the whites. As interpreters, I chose carefully the men who possessed the best knowledge of pidgin-English. One man, Matarē (whose photograph appears in Pl. 11), in particular was very useful to me, being interested, careful, and more articulate than the others. With him, and some others, I went over the greater part of my material (omitting, of course, information given to me in confidence), interlining my note-books with a pidgin-English translation, in the course of which I was able to get unfamiliar words explained to me, thus often opening up some new line of inquiry. Unfortunately for me, the local dialects differ almost from village to village, so I was obliged to fall back on pidgin-English as a lingua franca whenever I worked outside a limited area. In such cases I had to content myself with taking down in dialect the key words only. 198 124 126 [197]

At Petats I lived in the rest-house which is maintained for the use of Government officials. At Kurtatchi I had a house built specially for me. I was given a site in the new part of the village, facing two lines of huts. There the villagers, working under my direction, constructed a house and outbuildings which proved admirably suited to my needs, with a good verandah, from which I could watch what was going on in the village while I wrote up 123

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my notes. The photograph which forms the frontispiece to this volume was taken from it; the heads of the zinnias in my garden can be seen at the foot of the picture. The villagers were encouraged to make use of certain portions of this verandah. Men, women, and children freely availed themselves of this permission, enjoying the shade as they sat and worked, making string or nets, minding babies, playing at cat's-cradles, or chatting while they smoked or chewed betel. From such casual and unstudied contact I learned a great deal. Many evenings were spent in telling stories, when tellers and listeners would crowd round my big lamp, which gave them great pleasure.

I secured as my servant a young man named Ross, a native of Petats, who had worked for white people and knew what was required of him. He came with me to Kurtatchi, and soon made himself at home there, although at first he could not understand the local dialect. He served me faithfully and well. I could always leave my establishment safely in his charge, even for several days at a time, and count upon returning, after some strenuous expedition, to a clean house and a good meal. He was bitterly disappointed that he could not come home with me.

To enlist the interested co-operation of the natives, it was sufficient to tell them that my people, who lived very far away, had sent me to see what kind of folk they were, what they did, and what sort of things they could make, saying that this was my work, just as their work was fishing and gardening, and that my *tsunaun* (Chief) would be pleased if I could tell him all about them when I went home. This personal note particularly appealed to them, and they would sometimes say, in explaining something I had not properly understood: 'We do not want you to tell your *tsunaun* anything about us that is not true.' Note-book, typewriter, and camera were accepted without question as aids to my work, the two latter arousing great interest.

After I had been resident among them for a little while, they began to come and tell me when anything special was going to take place, in case I wished to be present. When a feast was held I was always invited, and they were delighted when, under the sponsorship of the women, I took part in their dances. During my morning stroll round the village I was sure to be asked to join in some one or other of the day's activities, an invitation which I frequently accepted, gaining thereby a practical acquaintance with their

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methods of hunting, fishing, and gardening, &c., as well as consolidating my position and getting to know them more intimately. That they accepted me as a member of the community they showed when, on my return from a journey, they performed the appropriate ceremony for me as they would for one of themselves under like circumstances, and clinched it by saying: 'Now you really belong to us.' I received invitations from the people of several other villages to come and live with them. This was, of course, impossible in the time at my disposal, but whenever I paid them a short visit I was always received most hospitably. 123

In working among the women I took all the advantage I could of my sex, and although I found them less articulate than the men, they were, I feel sure, on much more intimate terms with me than they would have been with a man, besides admitting me to their huts during parturition, when all males are excluded. Among the men, however, it became a recognized convention to ignore the fact that I was a woman, and I was allowed to learn their secrets and to handle objects, such as the bull-roarer and the stone fish used in bonito magic, which are kept from sight and knowledge of their own womenfolk. Although I was careful to deserve their confidence, I do not think this prejudiced my position among the women at all, since it was understood that it was part of my work to know about the men as well as about themselves.

I often accompanied my native friends on their journeys and thus became acquainted with the greater part of Buka and its associated islets, the whole length of the north coast of Bougainville, and portions of the mountainous hinterland. Between the inhabitants of Buka and those of the north coast of Bougainville there is at the present time, and probably always has been, close social contact, including frequent intermarriage. As will be seen in the chapters that follow, the structure of their society, their clans and their kinship system, are fundamentally the same, and allowing for local variations, there seems sufficient resemblance to indicate that this whole area may be considered as a cultural unit. It extends down the east coast of Bougainville as far as Numanuma, and down the west coast for a shorter distance, the limits of which I was unable to determine exactly. The Hahon people (Wawon in the Kurtatchi dialect, which has no *h* sound) inhabiting the foothills behind the northern shore do not intermarry with the coast people, with perhaps some rare exceptions, and in their intercourse 101 648